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Mandatory Review  
Case # NLJ 1967-13-3 ISCAP Appeal  
Document # 70b

2 June 1967

SUBJECT: Views of General Meir Amit, Head of the  
Israel Intelligence Service, on the Crisis  
in the Middle East

1. The success of Egyptian President Nasser in manipulating the current crisis in the Middle East will, if left unimpeded, result in the loss of the area to the United States. The first sign of the domino reaction was Jordan's forced accommodation with Egypt. Saudi Arabia and Lebanon will be next, after which it will be the turn of Turkey and Iran. Even Tunisia and Morocco will eventually topple to Nasser.

2. It is a mistake on the part of Israel and of the United States to treat passage through the Straits of Tiran as the real issue. It is only a pretext to Nasser's moves to dominate the Middle East. Nasser himself made a mistake when he declared a blockage of the Straits, for he could have produced the same result by just moving his military forces into the Sinai. This alone, without any act of aggression, would ruin Israel's economy by forcing Israel to keep its reserves mobilized.

3. Nasser will not attack Israel on the ground for the moment; however, if Israel continues to do nothing, a surprise Egyptian air strike against Dimona or airfields is very possible. Israel knows the details on bombing instructions and targets that have been issued to Egyptian tactical air units. But Nasser would prefer to provoke Israel so that he could point to Israel as the aggressor.

4. Israel erred in not striking against Egypt a week or ten days ago, when it could have created chaos by attacking the Egyptian Army while it was on the move. The Egyptians are now entrenched in the Sinai, and the price of Israel action in terms of casualties will probably be doubled. But Israel is being forced to act because of the inaction of others, and it cannot wait longer than a few days or a week.

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5. Israel does not want collusion with the United States in any action it might undertake against Egypt nor does it want the United States to fight for Israel. What Israel does want from the United States is the assurance of rapid supply of arms, preventing the Soviets from intervening, and understanding and political support. Israel can then handle its own case. It is as much, if not more, in the interests of the United States than of Israel that Nasser be defeated.

6. Internal pressures are at work against the present Israel Government. Claims are being made that the government's decision not to react quickly to the Egyptian moves was based on false political assumptions. The lives that will be lost in any action by Israel will be placed against the account of those who urged Israel not to react earlier. Efforts by the United States in the United Nations and elsewhere have not born fruit, and it was a mistake on the part of the United States to hold Israel back.

7. Israel's economy is suffering with each additional day of crisis. There are no workers in the fields, and the harvest is still standing, but so long as 82,000 Egyptian troops remain in the Sinai, Israel cannot demobilize its reserves and send them back to their homes and fields. It is better to die fighting than from starving.

8. The commitments of the United States in the Middle East are no less than those in Vietnam, but the Middle East offers the United States a chance to demonstrate its commitment at a much lower price than in Vietnam. In Israel, the United States has people on whom it can rely.

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